

Barbara Fletcher - Account of Life in Wakefield

I was born on the 30th November in a council house two streets below Pontefract barracks.

My dad was called John Robert Moxon and my mum was called Barbara Pashley Turver.

Dad came from a big family, so although he had always worked, times were always hard.

Mum had been sent to Pontefract from Hull. Her mother had died at the age of thirty. Her father, I was never told about. As the youngest of four sisters, mum was grown up before she ever saw the other three again, as they were all farmed out to other members of the family following her mum's death. My mum was put with a lady she hated all her life. I don't know if it was mutual? Dad worked every night because as a baker, it was a bit more money, so growing up I had only ever been to Blackpool for one week with my parents because a friend of my mum's married a man and they took a boarding house, so we got good rates.

That's where I was going March 25th 1953, with my new husband. It was a present for us. The wedding was at the church, late morning, then lunch for a few friends and both lots of parents. For another present, a friend ran us to Wakefield Kirkgate station. I can't say as I noticed much, as the occasion was really the main thing, well really the only thing on my mind!

There were lots of young couples on the train, whether they were married I don't know. I was shy in those days, but there was lots of 'affection' on that train!

I had not, as I said, been to many places because of a lack of money, but living near the barracks during the second world war as kids, we thought it was great. We didn't realise that all of the young men were part of the next batch to be sent straight into the fighting.

When the men were on leave, they waved and as I got older they whistled. Pontefract didn't get bombed.

On Sundays, a band played the men down to church. The parade was so long, the men at the back could not hear the band, but kept wonderfully in step. We thought it was a wonderful sight. Only when we were grown up did we fear the terrible loss of life.